

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently Amended) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality
2 of connected user ~~terminals~~ computers, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline
3 for ~~[[an]]~~ a reality-based electronic game to at least one user, the method comprising:
4 deconstructing the complete storyline content into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing ~~[[an]]~~ a first episode into ~~[[an]]~~ a first episodic game module;
6 ~~transmitting~~ providing the first episodic game module to at least one user ~~terminal~~
7 computer such that only a first portion of the complete storyline content is currently available;
8 thereafter
9 altering the first portion of the storyline content to include a game-related '
10 reference to a current real-world event, said current event occurring after said first episodic game
11 module is transmitted to the at least one user; and
12 providing the reference to the at least one user.

1 2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 scheduling intervals for generation and transmission of episodic game modules
3 for the complete storyline content.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
2 responsive to a technological improvement occurring during a first part of an
3 interval for generation and transmission of an episodic game module, incorporating the
4 technological improvement into the episodic game module scheduled for generation and
5 transmission for that interval.

1 4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2 further comprising:

responsive to a technological improvement occurring during implementation of an episode, incorporating the technological improvement into the episodic game module scheduled for generation and transmission for that interval.

5. (canceled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein generating episodic game modules further comprises:

generating a technology module and content module for each episodic game module to allow modification of the technology module without requiring modification of the content of an episodic game module.

7. (Currently Amended) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user ~~terminals~~ computers, a method of delivering content comprising a storyline for [[an]] a reality-based electronic game to at least one user comprising:

constructing a plurality of episodes to relate the complete storyline content;

implementing [[an]] a first episode into a game module; [[and]]

transmitting the first episodic game module to at least one user ~~terminal~~ computer
such that only a portion of the complete storyline content is currently available; thereafter

altering the remaining storyline content to include a game-related reference to a
current real-world event occurring after said game module is transmitted to the at least one user;
and

providing the reference to the at least one user after the at least one user accesses
the first episodic game module.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein an episodic game module is transmitted at periodically scheduled intervals.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the episodic game modules are transmitted monthly.

1 10. (Currently Amended) A method of providing an Internet-enabled game, said
2 game including a plurality of episodes related to a storyline arc and made available serially on a
3 periodic basis, the method comprising:

4 providing access to an initial episodic content module; and thereafter
5 altering the storyline arc;
6 creating new episodic content related to the altered storyline arc;
7 receiving information regarding a user's current state in the game; [and]
8 responsive to the current state indicating that a conditional action has been
9 performed, enabling new episodic content to be accessed by a user; and

10 responsive to the current state indicating that a time limit for performing the
11 conditional action has been exceeded, automatically transmitting new episodic content to the
12 user.

1 11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein automatically
2 transmitting includes further comprising:
3 ~~responsive to the current state,~~ transmitting a voice mail message related to the
4 user.

1 12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein automatically
2 transmitting includes further comprising:
3 ~~responsive to the current state,~~ transmitting a voice mail an e-mail message
4 related to the user.

1 13. (Currently Amended) The method of 10 wherein automatically transmitting
2 includes further comprising:
3 ~~responsive to the current state,~~ transmitting a pager message related to the user.

1 14-16. (Canceled)

1 17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein current state
2 information comprises a notification from an application module resident on a user's terminal
3 that the user has accessed a pre-specified web page.

1 18. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein current state information
2 comprises a user action.

1 19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is calling a
2 predefined telephone number.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is accessing a
2 predetermined web site.

1 21. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is requesting a
2 specific search term.

1 22. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein episodic content is stored within
2 a third-party website that is content-related to the storyline, and the users are directed to the web-
3 site to discover the episodic content.

1 23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22 wherein episodic content is
2 placed on a third party web site for compensation related to user traffic to the web site related to
3 users searching for the episodic content.

1 24. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein an episode is made available
2 responsive to determining whether a user has submitted payment for the episode.

1 25-41 (Canceled)

1 42. (Currently Amended) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality
2 of connected user ~~terminals~~ computers, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline
3 for ~~[[an]]~~ a reality-based electronic game to at least one user, the method comprising:
4 deconstructing the complete storyline content into a plurality of episodes;

5 implementing an episode into a sequence of episodic game modules; [[and]]
6 periodically transmitting [[to]] one of the episodic game modules to at least one
7 user ~~terminal~~ computer such that only a portion of the complete storyline content is currently
8 available; thereafter
9 altering the remaining storyline content to include a game-related reference to a
10 current real-world event occurring after a first one of said episodic game module is transmitted to
11 the at least one user; and
12 providing the reference to the at least one user after the at least one user accesses
13 the first episodic game module.

1 43. (Currently Amended) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality
2 of connected user ~~terminals~~ computers, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline
3 for [[an]] a reality-based electronic game to at least one user, the method comprising:
4 deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing an episode into an episodic game module; [[and]]
6 periodically permitting access to one of the episodic game modules by at least one
7 user ~~terminal~~ computer such that only a portion of the complete storyline content is currently
8 available; thereafter
9 altering the remaining storyline content to include a game-related reference to a
10 current real-world event occurring after a first episodic game module is accessed by the at least
11 one user; and
12 providing the reference to the at least one user after the at least one user accesses
13 the first episodic game module.

1 44. (Currently Amended) In a network comprising a content server and a
2 plurality of connected user terminals, a method for providing entertainment content comprising a
3 storyline for an electronic game to at least one user, the method comprising:
4 receiving a request from a user to gain access to an episode of the electronic
5 game; [[and]]
6 delivering an episode of the electronic game to the [[user]] user;

7 determining a date for the request received from the user; and
8 permitting access to the requested episode responsive to the determined date
9 being within a permitted window for delivery.

1 45-46. (Canceled)

1 47. (New) The method of claim 1, further including implementing a second
2 episode into an episodic game module and providing the second game module to the at least one
3 user, said second game module including said game-related reference to the real-world event.

1 48. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the reference is a fabricated news
2 story related to the real world event.

1 49. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein providing includes transmitting
2 from the content server to the at least one user computer over a network.

1 50. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein providing includes providing the
2 first episodic game module on a computer readable medium readable by the at least one user
3 computer.

1 51. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the reference is provided to the at
2 least one user computer by the content server using a network transport mechanism.

1 52. The method of claim 51, wherein the network transport mechanism
2 includes a mechanism for sending one of an e-mail, a voice mail, a facsimile, and an instant
3 message.

1 53. (New) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of
2 connected user computers, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for a reality-
3 based electronic game to a plurality of users, the method comprising:
4 implementing the storyline content into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing the episodes into a sequence of episodic game modules; and

6 for each user, transmitting one or more of the episodic game modules to the user's
7 computer on a conditional basis, such that the plurality of users reach the same points in the
8 game at approximately the same time.

1 54. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein transmitting on a conditional
2 basis includes determining whether an amount of time for completing a stage in the game
3 episode has been exceeded, and if so, transmitting an episodic game module.

1 55. (New) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of
2 connected user computers, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for a reality-
3 based electronic game to a plurality of users, the method comprising:
4 implementing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing the episodes into a sequence of episodic game modules;
6 for each user, permitting access to the episodic game modules on a conditional
7 basis such that only a portion of the storyline content is currently available to the user; and
8 for each user, determining whether an amount of time for completing a
9 conditional action in a game episode has been exceeded, and if so, automatically transmitting an
10 episodic game module to the user to ensure that the users reach the same points in the game at
11 approximately the same time.

1 56. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein permitting access on a
2 conditional basis includes determining whether the user has accomplished a task, and if so
3 permitting access to the next episodic game module.

1 57. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the task includes one of
2 accessing a specific web site and entering a specific search term.

1 58. (New) In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of
2 connected user computers, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for a reality-
3 based electronic game to a plurality of users, the method comprising:
4 implementing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;

5 implementing the episodes into a sequence of episodic game modules;
6 for each user, transmitting one or more episodic game modules to the user on a
7 conditional basis such that only a portion of the storyline content is currently available to the
8 user; and
9 for each user, determining whether an amount of time for completing a
10 conditional action in a game episode has been exceeded, and if so, automatically transmitting an
11 episodic game module to the user to ensure that the users reach the same stages in the game at
12 approximately the same time.